GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:699
ANSWERED ON:15.05.2000
SEMINAR ON INDIA S FOREST BEYOND
NARESH KUMAR PUGLIA

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a seminar on `India`s Forest Beyond 2000` was held at new Delhi recently;

(b) if so, the details of the discussions held in the seminar and the name of persons participated therein;

(c) whether the target of bringing 33 percent landmass areas under forest cover has not been achieved by the Government so far; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS

(SHRI T.R. BAALU)

(a), (b), (c) & (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (d) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.699 FOR 15.5.2000 REGAR SEMINAR ON INDIA`S FOREST BEYOND 2000

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The seminar on `India`s Forests beyond 2000` was organised during April 19th -21st, 2000 by the Commonwealth Forestry Association, India and the Indian Council of Forestry Research & Education with sponsorship from the Planning Commission and supported by the Department for International development, UK and Ford Foundation. The seminar discussed the following issues:

(i) Forest Policy Options

(ii) Management Options

(iii) International Agenda

(iv) Institutional Mechanism

(v) Inter-sectoral linkages

The seminar was attended by 171 participants drawn from Government of India, various State Governments, academic and research institutions, NGOs, social workers, press and international organisations and members of Commonwealth Forestry Association.The recommendations of the seminar are enclosed at Annexure-A

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The National Forest Policy, 1988 envisages that the national goal should be to have a minimum of one-third of the total land area of the country under forest or tree cover. As per State of Forest Report, 1997 prepared by the Forest Survey of India (FSI), the total forest cover in the country is 63.34 million ha (19.27% of total land mass). Besides this, it has also been estimated that tree cover on private lands in the country is about 16 million ha. This makes the total forest and tree cover on 24.13% of total land mass of the country. National goal of one-third area under forest and tree cover could not be achieved due to non-availability of resources. Government has prepared a comprehensive National Forestry Action Programme for 20 years for sustainable development of forests as well as to bring one-third of country`s area under forest and tree cover. The total funds required for this purpose is estimated to be Rs.133902.78 crore in twenty years.

ANNEXURE-A

INDIA`S FORESTS BEYOND 2000

The delegates attending the Commonwealth Forestry Association of India and Indian Council of Forestry Research & Education

Seminar on `India`s Forests beyond 2000` made the following recommendations for a vision for forestry in India in the new millennium.

Technical Session - I (Forest Policy Options)

Recommendation 1

Recognising that the overall national development planning process requires harmonisation between the policies of various sectors;

Recommends that, in order to achieve the objectives of gender sensitive Sustainable Forest and tree Management conservation and support to rural livelihoods be addressed in simultaneously and in parallel.

Recommendation 2

Recognising the need to quantify and publicise adequately the contribution of forests to the Green Gross National Product;

Recommends that national forest resource accounting should be institutionalised within the national economy.

Recommendation 3

Recognising the need for the widest participation of people if wise and sustainable management and development of the nation`s forests is to be achieved;

Recommends communities, individuals, NGOs, CBOs, Panchyats and the corporate sector and combination of these be encouraged to join with forest service management to ensure sustainable forest management and development.

Recommendation 4

Recognising that, to achieve the objectives of the National Forest Policy there is a need to examine the feasibility of its targets;

Recommends that the Central Forestry Commission be revived and strengthened, with the following terms of reference:examine the feasibility of achieving the targets of forest/tree cover set in the National Forest Policydevelop a strategy for achievable tree and forest cover A clear strategy should be chalked out to ensure adequate flow of funds for development of forestry sector.

Recommendation 5

Recognising the productive potential of forests for the benefit of forest-dependent people;

Recommends that forest production, wherever silviculturally possible, should aim to produce the widest range of goods & services for the best benefit of forest-dependent people, surplus revenue to be used to increase resource flow for forestry sector development.

Technical Session - II (Management Options)

Recommendation 6

Recognising that reliable data on the extent of forests and of tree wealth outside forested areas and areas likely to be suitable for tree planting is not readily available in the country;

Recommends that, to improve strategic planning for resource management, data on forest and tree resources be augmented and that existing and newly-acquired information be made accessible to all stakeholders.

Recommendation 7

Recognising that the management objectives for the sector have been identified, prioritised and published in the National Forestry Action Programme (NFAP);

Recommends that these objectives be implemented in a time-bound manner as a matter of urgency in line with the broad provisions of the NFAP.

Recommendation 8

Recognising the poor productivity levels of forests in India and potential of trees and woodlands on non-forest lands to meet the local and national needs;

Recommends that research institutions should seek to evolve technological innovations for resource assessment, planning, management and improving the productivity of forests and tree plantations on non-forest lands.

Technical Session - III (International Agenda)

Recommendation 9

Recognising the increasing attention paid to the global and national roles of forestry in international fora;

Recommends a task force be set up to study the issues on international forestry matters with the following terms of reference keeping in view the overall national interest, consult widely with national stakeholders and develop a national stand on forestry related issues develop a strategy for achieving harmony between national and international policies make a report to government to ensure that India`s position is clearly understood and presented in the international arena and recommend a national programme to systematically pursue economic and other opportunities from new international developments, agreements and conventions.

Recommendation 10

Recognising that, with depleting external assistance, it is increasingly the country`s primary responsibility to manage its own forest resources;

Recommends that the funding under EAPs does not become a substitute for sustained basic domestic support and that it should be an additionality to the national plan allocation.

Technical Session - IV (Institutional Mechanism)

Recommendation 11

Recognising the overwhelming need for the sustainable development and growth of the forest sector;

Recommends that the institutional structure of and potential revenue flows from forest management be thoroughly assessed and an appropriate enabling legal framework be evolved by involving different stakeholders. An interdisciplinary task force could be considered for this process.

Technical Session - V (Inter-sectoral Linkages)

Recommendation 12

Recognising that the holistic management of forests, lands and water resources requires the coordination of many sectors in addition to the forest sector if the production of the goods and services from these resources is to be optimised for the benefit of civil society;

Recommends that appropriate mechanisms for coordination at all levels be developed centrally and that in particular the policies for tariffs, pricing, financial instruments, market development and inter-state movement be dovetailed to meet these objectives.